



4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund,
Validation Grants

AGENCY: Office of Innovation and Improvement, Department
of Education

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

Investing in Innovation Fund, Validation grants

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year
(FY) 2013.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

84.411B (Validation grants).

Dates:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE 2 DAYS AFTER DATE OF
PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: [INSERT DATE 20
DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60
DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 3, 2013.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The Investing in Innovation Fund (i3), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), provides funding to support (1) local educational agencies (LEAs), and (2) nonprofit organizations in partnership with (a) one or more LEAs or (b) a consortium of schools. The i3 program is designed to generate and validate solutions to persistent educational challenges and to support the expansion of effective solutions across the country to serve substantially larger numbers of students. The central design element of the i3 program is its multi-tier structure that links the amount of funding that an applicant may receive to the quality of the evidence supporting the efficacy of the proposed project. Applicants proposing practices supported by limited evidence can receive relatively small grants that support the development and initial evaluation of promising practices and help to identify new solutions to pressing challenges; applicants proposing practices supported by evidence from rigorous evaluations, such as large randomized controlled trials, can receive sizable grants to support expansion across the Nation. This structure provides incentives for applicants to build evidence of effectiveness of their proposed projects and to address the

barriers to serving more students across schools, districts, and States so that applicants can compete for more sizeable grants.

As importantly, all i3 projects are required to generate additional evidence of effectiveness. All i3 grantees must use part of their budgets to conduct independent evaluations (as defined in this notice) of their projects. This ensures that projects funded under the i3 program contribute significantly to improving the information available to practitioners and policymakers about which practices work, for which types of students, and in what contexts.

The Department awards three types of grants under this program: "Development" grants, "Validation" grants, and "Scale-up" grants. These grants differ in terms of the level of prior evidence of effectiveness required for consideration of funding, the level of scale the funded project should reach, and, consequently, the amount of funding available to support the project.

This notice invites applications for Validation grants only. The notice inviting applications for Scale-up grants is published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register. The notice inviting applications for Development grants was published in the Federal Register on March 27,

2013 (78 FR 18710) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-27/pdf/2013-07003.pdf.

Validation grants provide funding to support expansion of projects supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in this notice) to the national or regional level (as defined in this notice). Validation grants must further assess the effectiveness of the i3-supported practice through a rigorous evaluation, with particular focus on the populations for, and the contexts in, which the practice is most effective. We expect and consider it appropriate that each applicant proposes to use the Validation funding to build its capacity to deliver the i3-supported practice, particularly early in the funding period, to successfully reach the level of scale proposed in its application. Additionally, we expect each applicant to address any specific barriers to the growth or scaling of the organization or practice (including barriers related to cost-effectiveness) in order to deliver the i3-supported practice at the proposed level of scale and provide strategies to address these barriers as part of its proposed scaling plan.

All Validation grantees must evaluate the effectiveness of the practice that the supported project implements and expands. We expect that these evaluations

will be conducted in a variety of contexts and for a variety of students, will identify the core elements of the practice, and will codify the practices to support adoption or replication by the applicant and other entities.

We remind LEAs of the continuing applicability of the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students who may be served under i3 grants. Any grants in which LEAs participate must be consistent with the rights, protections, and processes established under IDEA for students who are receiving special education and related services or are in the process of being evaluated to determine their eligibility for such services.

As described later in this notice, in connection with making competitive grant awards, an applicant is required, as a condition of receiving assistance under this program, to make civil rights assurances, including an assurance that its program or activity will comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Department's section 504 implementing regulations, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Regardless of whether a student with disabilities is specifically targeted as a "high-need student" (as defined in this notice) in a particular grant application, recipients are required to comply with all legal nondiscrimination

requirements, including, but not limited to the obligation to ensure that students with disabilities are not denied access to the benefits of the recipient's program because of their disability. The Department also enforces Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as the regulations implementing Title II of the ADA, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities.

Furthermore, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. On December 2, 2011, the Departments of Education and Justice jointly issued guidance that explains how educational institutions can promote student diversity or avoid racial isolation within the framework of Title VI (e.g., through consideration of the racial demographics of neighborhoods when drawing assignment zones for schools or through targeted recruiting efforts). The "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" is available on the Department's Web site at www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf.

Background: The FY 2013 i3 Validation competition incorporates lessons learned from prior i3 competitions. As such, it includes several changes from prior i3

competitions that prospective applicants should note. These changes reflect the recently revised i3 program design, as described in the notice of final priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria for this program (2013 i3 NFP), published in the Federal Register on March 27, 2013 (78 FR 18682) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-27/pdf/2013-07016.pdf.

In the 2013 i3 NFP, the Department redesigned key aspects of the i3 program to improve the FY 2013 and future i3 competitions by accelerating the identification of promising solutions to pressing challenges in K-12 public education, supporting the evaluation of the efficacy of such solutions, and developing new approaches to scaling effective practices to serve more students.

One example of the various changes we established in the 2013 i3 NFP pertains to the breadth and specificity of the potential priorities for a given i3 competition. Specifically, the 2013 i3 NFP includes 11 priorities, representing a range of education topics that the Secretary may select from when establishing the priorities for an i3 competition for a given year. Although the Department has used broad priorities in the past, the 2013 i3 NFP includes subparts under each priority that target specific needs. These subparts facilitate the i3 program's goal of building

a portfolio of solutions and corresponding evidence regarding different approaches to addressing critical challenges in public education. When selecting the priorities for a given competition, the Department considers several factors, including the Department's policy priorities, the need for new solutions in a particular priority area, other available funding for a particular priority area, and the results and lessons learned from prior i3 competitions. The Department also considered the existing evidence of effectiveness when selecting the subparts for this year's Validation competition.

We include five absolute priorities in the FY 2013 Validation competition. Under each, we identify subparts from which applicants must select in order to meet the absolute priority.

First, we include an absolute priority on improving the effectiveness of teachers or principals because such improvements are integral to the Department's mission. Research indicates that teachers and principals are the most critical in-school factors in improving student

achievement.¹ This priority, therefore, encourages applicants to focus on improving the effectiveness of teachers or principals, and encourages applicants to identify effective methods for supporting, evaluating, or retaining effective teachers or principals, particularly at schools that serve high-need students. Specifically, we include a subpart under this priority for projects that develop and implement models of induction and support for improving the knowledge and skills of novice teachers or novice principals. Currently, the Department funds several i3 projects that focus on teacher recruitment or content-specific professional development for teachers, but few of these projects focus on supporting current teachers in their early years of teaching. Given that many of the Nation's teachers are first- or second-year teachers, and given the rates at which novice teachers leave the profession, we are interested in adding projects that focus on novice teachers to the i3 portfolio. Similarly, few of the current i3 projects focus on novice principals; as

¹ Wright, S.P., Horn, S.P., Sanders, W.L. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects on student achievement: Implications for teacher evaluation. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education 11:57-67; Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. Econometrica, 73(2):417-458.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S., and Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. Available at www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/Leadership/ReviewofResearch.pdf.

such, we include this subpart to encourage applicants to propose projects that will improve the ability of novice principals to improve their schools' instructional programs and operations.

We also include a subpart that encourages applicants to implement projects that extend highly effective teachers' reach to allow effective teachers to serve more students. Given how important it is for students, particularly high-need students on which the i3 program focuses, to access highly effective teachers, applicants are encouraged to propose innovative ways to expand the reach of highly effective teachers, without necessarily increasing the workload of such teachers. Applicants might consider, for example, using technology-enabled learning opportunities to facilitate student access to highly effective teachers in subject areas that a school may not offer, or offering highly effective teachers relief from some of their administrative responsibilities in order to allow them to teach additional students. This subpart provides the opportunity for applicants to change the operating conditions within schools and districts in ways that professionalize teaching and improve outcomes for high-need students. It also supports increased efficiencies at the school and district levels.

Second, we include an absolute priority on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Ensuring that all students can access coursework and excel in STEM fields is essential to our Nation's economy and future prosperity. An increasing number of careers require an understanding of STEM concepts and the application of STEM skills and techniques; therefore, this priority addresses this growing need. The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST)² has produced reports on K-12 and undergraduate STEM education that provide recommendations on increasing achievement and postsecondary enrollment in STEM fields. The recommendations include cultivating and recruiting STEM teachers, creating STEM-related experiences to inspire and engage students, and encouraging partnerships among stakeholders in order to diversify pathways to STEM careers.

Under this priority, the Department seeks to fund projects that would address these recommendations by including subparts focusing on recruiting individuals with content expertise in STEM into teaching roles in public schools and on increasing the high-quality preparation or

² See www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/pcast/docsreports.

professional development for teachers or educators in STEM subjects.

Third, we include an absolute priority focused on improving academic outcomes for English learners (ELs). School districts across the country are experiencing increases in the enrollment of students who cannot speak, read, or write English well enough to participate meaningfully in educational programs and who therefore need specialized support services. Too often, these students' needs are not met, thereby inhibiting them from achieving the academic outcomes of which they are capable. To address this concern, we include a subpart that focuses on projects that would develop, implement, and evaluate new instructional approaches and tools to increase the number of ELs successfully completing courses in core academic areas.

Fourth, we include an absolute priority that focuses on the effective use of technology. Technology can improve student academic outcomes, often rapidly and in unprecedented ways. While there have been significant advances in the use of technology in numerous fields, the core operations of most schools and LEAs remain untouched.

The Department's National Education Technology Plan 2010³ highlighted the potential of "connected teaching" that makes it possible to, for example, use online tools to provide customized instruction for different learners, such as integrated assessments and continuous feedback, or to produce high-quality learning resources that can reach learners wherever and whenever needed. To support efforts to enhance technology-based student learning, we include three subparts under this priority.

The first subpart, which is consistent with the Department's focus on helping schools and LEAs personalize learning for their students, focuses on projects that provide students and teachers with equitable "anytime, anywhere" access to learning materials and experiences to which they otherwise may not have access. There are currently no other Department-funded projects that focus explicitly on this area.

The second subpart, which is consistent with the Department's efforts to enhance schools' use of technology to increase student achievement, supports projects that develop new methods and resources for professional development to improve teachers' abilities to use

³Found at www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010

technology.

The third subpart focuses on integrating technology with rigorous college- and career-ready standards to increase student achievement and teacher efficacy. Across all three subparts, we are particularly interested in supporting projects that use technology to meet students' diverse learning needs.

Finally, we include an absolute priority that focuses on serving rural communities. Prior i3 competitions, as well as other Department programs, have demonstrated that rural areas confront a plethora of challenges as they work to provide students with a high-quality education. In this year's competition, applicants applying under this priority must address one of the other four absolute priorities for the FY 2013 i3 Validation competition, as described above, while serving students enrolled in rural LEAs.

We also include three competitive preference priorities in the FY 2013 Validation competition. The Department encourages applicants to design projects that address these competitive preference priorities in their applications if they seek additional points.

First, we include a competitive preference priority focusing on improving cost-effectiveness and productivity. Improvements in operational, organizational, and

instructional processes and structures will enable organizations to achieve the best possible results in the most efficient manner. The Department continues to emphasize the importance of cost-effectiveness and productivity. The priority strengthens that focus by requiring sufficient detail about how the applicant aims to modify its processes and structures to improve productivity and how the applicant will evaluate whether the proposed project is cost-effective when implemented. Further, applicants addressing this priority must provide a detailed budget, an examination of different types of costs, and a plan to monitor and evaluate cost savings, all of which are essential to any reasoned attempt at improving productivity.

Second, we include a competitive preference priority for projects that enable the broad adoption of effective practices. A primary goal of the i3 program is to identify and support the expansion of effective practices. This competitive preference priority rewards applicants that will implement systematic methods for doing so. While Validation grantees must codify the core elements of its i3-supported practices, we are interested in projects that have a particular focus in this area. In addition, the education field needs access to strong, reliable data to

make informed decisions about effective practices that could replace less effective practices. This competitive preference priority supports strategies that identify key elements of effective practices and that capture lessons learned about the implementation of the practices. In addition, an applicant addressing this priority must commit to implementing the practice in other settings and locations in order to ensure that the practice can be successfully replicated.

Third, in order to expand the reach of the i3 program and encourage entities that have not applied previously for an i3 grant, the Department includes a competitive preference priority for novice i3 applicants. A novice i3 applicant is an applicant that has never received a grant under the i3 program. An applicant must identify whether it is a novice applicant when completing the applicant information sheet. Instructions on how to complete the applicant information sheet are included in the application package.

Finally, we include one invitational priority in the FY 2013 Validation competition. Too many children, particularly those from low-income families, lack access to high-quality early education and may enter school less prepared than their peers for school success. High-quality

early learning programs can improve children's vocabulary, improve their social and emotional development so they arrive in school ready to learn, and help them stay on track and engaged in early elementary grades. To support the Department's early learning efforts, we include an invitational priority for projects that, in addition to addressing one of i3's absolute priorities, include high-quality early learning components to help ensure that children, especially those from low-income families, enter kindergarten prepared for success.

In addition to the changes to the priorities, the 2013 i3 NFP also modifies aspects of the i3 program's requirements, definitions, and selection criteria. In general, these changes improve clarity and strengthen the requirements and design aspects of the i3 program. Most notably, we have clarified that all i3 grantees must implement practices that serve students who are in grades K-12 at some point during the funding period. Further, we have revised the evidence standards and definitions so that applicants can better understand what is required to meet each level of evidence.

For the FY 2013 Validation competition, applicants must be able to show moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in this notice) for the proposed process, product,

strategy, or practice included in their applications. Applicants should review the requirements section of this notice for instructions on how to demonstrate moderate evidence of effectiveness and for information on the other eligibility and program requirements.

The i3 program includes a statutory requirement for a private-sector match for all i3 grantees. Based on feedback from previous i3 applicants, we are modifying the process for applicants to secure and demonstrate evidence of, the required private-sector match for the FY 2013 i3 competition. While an applicant must secure 10 percent of its Federal grant award to be eligible for an i3 Validation grant, the timeframe in which an applicant must secure and submit evidence of the required private-sector matching funds is expanded. In the past, the highest-rated applicants only had approximately 30 days to secure 100 percent of their required private-sector matches, which proved difficult for both applicants and potential private-sector funders. While all of the past highest-rated i3 applicants successfully secured their matches and became i3 grantees, the Department is eager to improve the matching process to facilitate deeper public-private partnerships. Therefore, for the FY 2013 i3 competition, each highest-rated applicant as identified by the Department following

peer review of the applications, must submit evidence of 50 percent of the required private-sector match prior to the awarding of an i3 grant. An applicant must provide evidence of the remaining 50 percent of the required private-sector match no later than six months after the project start date (i.e., for the FY 2013 competition, six months after January 1, 2014, or by July 1, 2014). The grant will be terminated if the grantee does not secure its private-sector match by the established deadline. By decreasing the amount of the required match that must be secured before the i3 award can be made, the burden for both applicants and private-sector funders will be reduced, which in turn will foster improved collaboration.

This notice also includes selection criteria for applications for the FY 2013 Validation competition that are designed to ensure that applications selected for funding have the best potential to generate substantial improvements in student achievement (and other key outcomes), and include well-articulated plans for the implementation and evaluation of the proposed projects. Applicants should review the selection criteria and submission instructions carefully to ensure their applications address this year's criteria.

An entity that submits an application for a Validation grant must include the following information in its application: an estimate of the number of students to be served by the project; evidence of the applicant's ability to implement and appropriately evaluate the proposed project; and information about its capacity (i.e., qualified personnel, financial resources, and management capacity) to further develop and bring the project to a State or regional level, working directly or through partners, either during or following the grant period, if positive results are obtained.

We recognize that LEAs are not typically responsible for taking their practices, strategies, or programs to scale; however, all applicants can and should partner with others to disseminate and take their effective practices, strategies, and programs to scale.

The Department will screen applications that are submitted for Validation grants in accordance with the requirements in this notice and determine which applications meet the eligibility and other requirements in the 2013 i3 NFP. Peer reviewers will review all applications for Validation grants that are submitted by the established deadline.

Applicants should note, however, that we may screen for eligibility at multiple points during the competition process, including before and after peer review; applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive a grant award regardless of peer reviewer scores or comments. If we determine that a proposed project in a Validation grant application is not supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness, or that the applicant does not demonstrate the required prior record of improvement, or does not meet any other requirement established in the 2013 i3 NFP, the application will not be considered for funding.

Priorities: This competition includes five absolute priorities and three competitive preference priorities, from the 2013 i3 NFP. The competition also includes one invitational priority.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2013 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet one of these priorities.

Under the Validation grant competition, each of the five absolute priorities constitutes its own funding category. The Secretary intends to award grants under each

absolute priority for which applications of sufficient quality are submitted.

An applicant for a Validation grant must choose one of the five absolute priorities. Applications will be peer reviewed and scored; scores will be rank ordered by absolute priority, so an applicant must clearly identify the specific absolute priority that the proposed project addresses. Applicants that choose to submit an application under the absolute priority for Serving Rural Communities must identify an additional absolute priority. The peer-reviewed scores for applications submitted under the Serving Rural Communities priority will be ranked with other applications under the Serving Rural Communities priority and not included in the ranking for the additional priority that the applicant identifies. This design helps to ensure that applicants under the Serving Rural Communities priority receive an "apples to apples" comparison with other rural applicants.

These priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1--Improving the Effectiveness of Teachers or Principals.

Projects addressing one of the following priority areas:

(a) Developing and implementing models of induction and support for improving the knowledge and skills of novice teachers or novice principals to accelerate student performance, including but not limited to strategies designed to increase teacher retention or improve teacher or principal effectiveness.

(b) Extending highly effective teachers' reach to serve more students, including strategies such as new course designs, staffing models, technology platforms, or new opportunities for collaboration that allow highly effective teachers to reach more students, or approaches or tools that reduce administrative and other burden while maintaining or improving effectiveness.

Absolute Priority 2--Improving Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education.

Projects addressing one of the following priority areas:

(a) Developing and implementing new methods and resources for recruiting individuals with content expertise in STEM subject areas into teaching.

(b) Increasing the high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers or other educators in STEM subjects, through activities that include building content and pedagogical content knowledge.

Absolute Priority 3--Improving Academic Outcomes for English Learners (ELs).

Projects addressing the following priority area:

Increasing the number and proportion of ELs successfully completing courses in core academic subjects by developing, implementing, and evaluating new instructional approaches and tools that are sensitive to the language demands necessary to access challenging content, including technology-based tools.

Absolute Priority 4--Effective Use of Technology.

Projects addressing one of the following priority areas:

(a) Providing students and teachers with equitable “anytime, anywhere” access to learning materials and experiences that they otherwise would not have access to, such as rigorous coursework that is not offered in a particular school, or effective professional development activities or learning communities enabled by technology.

(b) Developing new methods and resources for teacher preparation or professional development that increase teachers’ abilities to utilize technology to enhance their knowledge and skills to improve student achievement (as defined in this notice) and to close achievement gaps.

(c) Integrating technology with the implementation of rigorous college- and career-ready standards to increase student achievement (as defined in this notice), student engagement, and teacher efficacy, such as by providing embedded, real-time assessment and feedback to students and teachers.

Absolute Priority 5--Serving Rural Communities.

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects addressing one of the absolute priorities established for the 2013 Validation i3 competition and under which the majority of students to be served are enrolled in rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice).

Competitive Preference Priorities: For FY 2013 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) we award an additional point to applications that meet competitive preference priority one, an additional two points to applications that meet competitive preference priority two, and an additional point to applications that meet competitive preference priority three.

Applicants may address more than one of the competitive preference priorities. An applicant must

identify in the project narrative section of its application the priority or priorities it wishes the Department to consider for purposes of earning competitive preference priority points.

Note: The Department will not review or award points under any competitive preference priority that fails to clearly identify the competitive preference priority or priorities the applicant wishes the Department to consider for purposes of earning competitive preference priority points.

These priorities are:

Competitive Preference Priority 1--Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity (zero or 1 points).

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

(a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.

(b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

(c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide--

(1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;

(2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;

(3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;

(4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and

(5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

Competitive Preference Priority 2--Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices (zero or 2 points).

Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An

application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training,

toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Competitive Preference Priority 3--Supporting Novice i3 Applicants (zero or 1 point).

Eligible applicants that have never directly received a grant under this program.

Invitational Priority: For FY 2013 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

This priority is:

Invitational Priority--Supporting High-Quality Early Learning.

The Secretary encourages applicants to propose projects that incorporate high-quality early learning components that are aligned with the early learning, elementary and secondary education systems in participating schools and help ensure that all children, especially those from low-income families, enter kindergarten and ready to succeed.

Definitions:

These definitions are from the 2013 i3 NFP. We may apply these definitions in any year in which this program is in effect.

Note: This notice invites applications for Validation grants. The following definitions apply to the three types of grants under the i3 program (i.e., Development, Validation, and Scale-up). Therefore, some of the definitions included in this section, primarily those related to demonstrations of evidence, may be more applicable to applications for Development and Scale-up grants.

Consortium of schools means two or more public elementary or secondary schools acting collaboratively for the purpose of applying for and implementing an i3 grant jointly with an eligible nonprofit organization.

Evidence of promise means there is empirical evidence to support the theoretical linkage between at least one critical component and at least one relevant outcome presented in the logic model (as defined in this notice) for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice. Specifically, evidence of promise means the following conditions are met:

- (a) There is at least one study that is either a--

(1) Correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias;

(2) Quasi-experimental study (as defined in this notice) that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations⁴; or

(3) Randomized controlled trial (as defined in this notice) that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with or without reservations⁵; and

(b) Such a study found a statistically significant or substantively important (defined as a difference of 0.25 standard deviations or larger), favorable association between at least one critical component and one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice.

High-need student means a student at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools (as defined in this notice), who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who

⁴ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

⁵ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English learners.

High-minority school is defined by a school's LEA in a manner consistent with the corresponding State's Teacher Equity Plan, as required by section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the ESEA. The applicant must provide, in its application, the definition(s) used.

High school graduation rate means a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate consistent with 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1) and may also include an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate consistent with 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(v) if the State in which the proposed project is implemented has been approved by the Secretary to use such a rate under Title I of the ESEA.

Highly effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup as described in section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xiii) of the ESEA (economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, migrant students, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students of each gender), achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student

growth. Eligible applicants may include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, based on student growth. Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates; college enrollment rates; evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, support for ensuring effective instruction across subject areas for a well-rounded education, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement; or evidence of attracting, developing, and retaining high numbers of effective teachers.

Highly effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth. Eligible applicants may include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, based on student academic growth. Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

Independent evaluation means that the evaluation is designed and carried out independent of, but in

coordination with, any employees of the entities who develop a process, product, strategy, or practice and are implementing it.

Innovation means a process, product, strategy, or practice that improves (or is expected to improve) significantly upon the outcomes reached with status quo options and that can ultimately reach widespread effective usage.

Large sample means a sample of 350 or more students (or other single analysis units) who were randomly assigned to a treatment or control group, or 50 or more groups (such as classrooms or schools) that contain 10 or more students (or other single analysis units) and that were randomly assigned to a treatment or control group.

Logic model (also referred to as theory of action) means a well-specified conceptual framework that identifies key components of the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice (i.e., the active "ingredients" that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the relationships among the key components and outcomes, theoretically and operationally.

Moderate evidence of effectiveness means one of the following conditions is met:

(a) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that: meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations;⁶ found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (as defined in this notice) (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse); and includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.

(b) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that: meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations;⁷ found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (as defined in this notice) (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of

⁶ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

⁷ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse); includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice; and includes a large sample (as defined in this notice) and a multi-site sample (as defined in this notice) (Note: multiple studies can cumulatively meet the large and multi-site sample requirements as long as each study meets the other requirements in this paragraph).

Multi-site sample means more than one site, where site can be defined as an LEA, locality, or State.

National level describes the level of scope or effectiveness of a process, product, strategy, or practice that is able to be effective in a wide variety of communities, including rural and urban areas, as well as with different groups (e.g., economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic groups, migrant populations, individuals with disabilities, English learners, and individuals of each gender).

Nonprofit organization means an entity that meets the definition of "nonprofit" under 34 CFR 77.1(c), or an institution of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental design by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations⁸ (they cannot meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations).

Randomized controlled trial means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to receive the intervention being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the intervention (the control group). The estimated effectiveness of the intervention is the difference between the average outcome for the treatment group and for the control group. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.⁹

⁸ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

⁹ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

Regional level describes the level of scope or effectiveness of a process, product, strategy, or practice that is able to serve a variety of communities within a State or multiple States, including rural and urban areas, as well as with different groups (e.g., economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic groups, migrant populations, individuals with disabilities, English learners, and individuals of each gender). For an LEA-based project to be considered a regional level project, a process, product, strategy, or practice must serve students in more than one LEA, unless the process, product, strategy, or practice is implemented in a State in which the State educational agency is the sole educational agency for all schools.

Relevant outcome means the student outcome or outcomes (or the ultimate outcome if not related to students) that the proposed project is designed to improve, consistent with the specific goals of the project and the i3 program.

Rural local educational agency means a local educational agency (LEA) that is eligible under the Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program or the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program authorized under Title VI, Part B of the ESEA. Eligible applicants may determine whether a particular LEA is eligible for these programs by

referring to information on the Department's Web site at www2.ed.gov/nclb/freedom/local/reap.html.

Strong evidence of effectiveness means that one of the following conditions is met:

(a) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that: meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations;¹⁰ found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (as defined in this notice) (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse); includes a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice; and includes a large sample (as defined in this notice) and a multi-site sample (as defined in this notice). (Note: multiple studies can cumulatively meet the large and multi-site sample requirements as long as each study meets the other requirements in this paragraph).

¹⁰ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

(b) There are at least two studies of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed, each of which: meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations;¹¹ found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (as defined in this notice) (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the studies or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse); includes a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice; and includes a large sample (as defined in this notice) and a multi-site sample (as defined in this notice).

Strong theory means a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice that includes a logic model (as defined in this notice).

Student achievement means--

(a) For grades and subjects in which assessments are required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3): (1) a student's score on such assessments and may include (2) other

¹¹ See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b), provided they are rigorous and comparable across schools within an LEA.

(b) For grades and subjects in which assessments are not required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3): alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student results on pre-tests, end-of-course tests, and objective performance-based assessments; student learning objectives; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across schools within an LEA.

Student growth means the change in student achievement (as defined in this notice) for an individual student between two or more points in time. An applicant may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Program Authority: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Division A, Section 14007, Pub. L. 111-5.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Education Department suspension and debarment regulations in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The notice of final

priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria for this program, published in the Federal Register on March 27, 2013 (78 FR 18682). Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreements or discretionary grant awards

Estimated Available Funds: \$134,500,000

These estimated available funds are the total available for all three types of grants under the i3 program (i.e., Development, Validation, and Scale-up).

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of the applications received, we may make additional awards in FY 2014 or later years from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards:

Scale-up grants: Up to \$20,000,000.

Validation grants: Up to \$12,000,000.

Development grants: Up to \$3,000,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:

Scale-up grants: \$19,000,000.

Validation grants: \$11,500,000.

Development grants: \$3,000,000.

Estimated Number of Awards:

Scale-up grants: 0-2 awards.

Validation grants: 4-8 awards.

Development grants: 10-20 awards.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: 36-60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Innovations that Improve Achievement for High-Need Students: All grantees must implement practices that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice), close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students (as defined in this notice).

2. Innovations that Serve Kindergarten-through-Grade-12 (K-12) Students: All grantees must implement practices that serve students who are in grades K-12 at some point during the funding period. To meet this requirement, projects that serve early learners (i.e., infants, toddlers, or preschoolers) must provide services or

supports that extend into kindergarten or later years, and projects that serve postsecondary students must provide services or supports during the secondary grades or earlier.

3. Eligible Applicants: Entities eligible to apply for i3 grants include either of the following:

- (a) An LEA.
- (b) A partnership between a nonprofit organization and--
 - (1) One or more LEAs; or
 - (2) A consortium of schools.

Statutory Eligibility Requirements: Except as specifically set forth in the Note about Eligibility for an Eligible Applicant that Includes a Nonprofit Organization that follows, to be eligible for an award, an eligible applicant must--

- (a) (1) Have significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b) (2) of the ESEA (economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities); or
- (2) Have demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement for all groups of students described in that section;

(b) Have made significant improvements in other areas, such as high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice) or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers or principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data;

(c) Demonstrate that it has established one or more partnerships with the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, and that organizations in the private sector will provide matching funds in order to help bring results to scale; and

(d) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, provide in the application the names of the LEAs with which the nonprofit organization will partner, or the names of the schools in the consortium with which it will partner. If an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization intends to partner with additional LEAs or schools that are not named in the application, it must describe in the application the demographic and other characteristics of these LEAs and schools and the process it will use to select them.

Note: An entity submitting an application should provide, in Appendix C, under "Other Attachments Form," of its application, information addressing the eligibility requirements described in this section. An applicant must

provide, in its application, sufficient supporting data or other information to allow the Department to determine whether the applicant has met the eligibility requirements. If the Department determines that an applicant has provided insufficient information in its application, the applicant will not have an opportunity to provide additional information.

Note about LEA Eligibility: For purposes of this program, an LEA is an LEA located within one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Note about Eligibility for an Eligible Applicant that Includes a Nonprofit Organization: The authorizing statute specifies that an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization meets the requirements in paragraphs (a) and (b) of the eligibility requirements for this program if the nonprofit organization has a record of significantly improving student achievement, attainment, or retention. For an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization must demonstrate that it has a record of significantly improving student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools. Therefore, an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization

does not necessarily need to include as a partner for its i3 grant an LEA or a consortium of schools that meets the requirements in paragraphs (a) and (b) of the eligibility requirements in this notice.

In addition, the authorizing statute specifies that an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization meets the requirements of paragraph (c) of the eligibility requirements in this notice if the eligible applicant demonstrates that it will meet the requirement for private-sector matching.

4. Cost Sharing or Matching: To be eligible for an award, an applicant must demonstrate that one or more private-sector organizations, which may include philanthropic organizations, will provide matching funds in order to help bring project results to scale. An eligible applicant must obtain matching funds, or in-kind donations, equal to at least 10 percent of its Federal grant award. The highest-rated eligible applicants must submit evidence of 50 percent of the required private-sector matching funds following the peer review of applications. A Federal i3 award will not be made unless the applicant provides adequate evidence that the 50 percent of the required private-sector match has been committed or the Secretary approves the eligible applicant's request to reduce the

matching-level requirement. An applicant must provide evidence of the remaining 50 percent of required private-sector match six months after the project start date.

The Secretary may consider decreasing the matching requirement on a case-by-case basis, and only in the most exceptional circumstances. An eligible applicant that anticipates being unable to meet the full amount of the private-sector matching requirement must include in its application a request that the Secretary reduce the matching-level requirement, along with a statement of the basis for the request.

Note: An applicant that does not provide a request for a reduction of the matching-level requirement in its application may not submit that request at a later time.

5. Other: The Secretary establishes the following requirements for the i3 program. These requirements are from the 2013 i3 NFP. We may apply these requirements in any year in which this program is in effect.

- Evidence Standards: To be eligible for an award, an application for a Validation grant must be supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in this notice). (2013 i3 NFP)

Note: An applicant should identify up to two study citations to be reviewed against WWC Evidence Standards for

the purposes of meeting the i3 evidence standard requirement. An applicant should clearly identify these citations in Appendix D, under the "Other Attachments Form," of its application. The Department will not review a study citation that an applicant fails to clearly identify for review.

An applicant must either ensure that all evidence is available to the Department from publicly available sources and provide links or other guidance indicating where it is available; or, in the application, include copies of evidence in Appendix D. If the Department determines that an applicant has provided insufficient information, the applicant will not have an opportunity to provide additional information at a later time.

- Funding Categories: An applicant will be considered for an award only for the type of i3 grant (i.e., Development, Validation, and Scale-up grants) for which it applies. An applicant may not submit an application for the same proposed project under more than one type of grant. (2013 i3 NFP)

- Limit on Grant Awards: (a) No grantee may receive more than two new grant awards of any type under the i3 program in a single year; (b) in any two-year period, no grantee may receive more than one new Scale-up or

Validation grant; and (c) no grantee may receive in a single year new i3 grant awards that total an amount greater than the sum of the maximum amount of funds for a Scale-up grant and the maximum amount of funds for a Development grant for that year. For example, in a year when the maximum award value for a Scale-up grant is \$25 million and the maximum award value for a Development grant is \$5 million, no grantee may receive in a single year new grants totaling more than \$30 million. (2013 i3 NFP)

- Subgrants: In the case of an eligible applicant that is a partnership between a nonprofit organization and (1) one or more LEAs or (2) a consortium of schools, the partner serving as the applicant and, if funded, as the grantee, may make subgrants to one or more entities in the partnership. (2013 i3 NFP)

- Evaluation: The grantee must conduct an independent evaluation (as defined in this notice) of its project. This evaluation must estimate the impact of the i3-supported practice (as implemented at the proposed level of scale) on a relevant outcome (as defined in this notice). The grantee must make broadly available digitally and free of charge, through formal (e.g., peer-reviewed journals) or informal (e.g., newsletters) mechanisms, the results of any evaluations it conducts of its funded activities.

In addition, the grantee and its independent evaluator must agree to cooperate with any technical assistance provided by the Department or its contractor and comply with the requirements of any evaluation of the program conducted by the Department. This includes providing to the Department, within 100 days of a grant award, an updated comprehensive evaluation plan in a format and using such tools as the Department may require. Grantees must update this evaluation plan at least annually to reflect any changes to the evaluation. All of these updates must be consistent with the scope and objectives of the approved application. (2013 i3 NFP)

- Communities of Practice: Grantees must participate in, organize, or facilitate, as appropriate, communities of practice for the i3 program. A community of practice is a group of grantees that agrees to interact regularly to solve a persistent problem or improve practice in an area that is important to them. (2013 i3 NFP)

- Management Plan: Within 100 days of a grant award, the grantee must provide an updated comprehensive management plan for the approved project in a format and using such tools as the Department may require. This management plan must include detailed information about implementation of the first year of the grant, including

key milestones, staffing details, and other information that the Department may require. It must also include a complete list of performance metrics, including baseline measures and annual targets. The grantee must update this management plan at least annually to reflect implementation of subsequent years of the project. (2013 i3 NFP)

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet, use the following address:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>. To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: ED Pubs, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304. Telephone, toll free: 1-877-433-7827. FAX: (703) 605-6794.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also:
www.EDPubs.gov or at its e-mail address:
edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this program or competition as follows: CFDA number 84.411B.

2. a. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition.

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Submit Application:

[INSERT DATE 20 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER].

We will be able to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications if we know the approximate number of applicants that intend to apply for funding under this competition. Therefore, the Secretary strongly encourages each potential applicant to notify us of the applicant's intent to submit an application by completing a web-based form. When completing this form, applicants will provide (1) the applicant organization's name and address and (2) the one absolute priority the applicant intends to address. Applicants may access this form online at <http://go.usa.gov/TrVG>. Applicants that do not complete this form may still submit an application.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the

selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. Applicants should limit the application narrative [Part III] for a Validation application to no more than 35 pages. Applicants are also strongly encouraged not to include lengthy appendices that contain information that could not be included in the narrative. Applicants should use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The page limit for the application does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support of the application. However, the page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section [Part III] of the

application.

b. Submission of Proprietary Information:

Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for the i3 program, some applications may include proprietary information as it relates to confidential commercial information. Confidential commercial information is defined as information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm. Upon submission, applicants should identify any information contained in their application that they consider to be confidential commercial information. Consistent with the process followed in the prior i3 competitions, we plan on posting the project narrative section of funded i3 applications on the Department's Web site. Identifying proprietary information in the submitted application will help facilitate this public disclosure process. Applicants are encouraged to identify only the specific information that the applicant considers to be proprietary and list the page numbers on which this information can be found in the appropriate Appendix section, under "Other Attachments Form," of their applications. In addition to identifying the page number on which that information can be found, eligible applicants will assist the Department in making

determinations on public release of the application by being as specific as possible in identifying the information they consider proprietary. Please note that, in many instances, identification of entire pages of documentation would not be appropriate.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Submit Application:

[INSERT DATE 20 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Informational Meetings: The i3 program intends to hold meetings designed to provide technical assistance to interested applicants for all three types of grants.

Detailed information regarding these meetings will be provided on the i3 Web site at

www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please

refer to section IV. 7. Other Submission Requirements of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review of Applications:
September 3, 2013.

4. Intergovernmental Review: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

5. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

6. Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, Central Contractor Registry, and System for Award Management: To do business with the Department of Education, you must--

a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);

b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR)--and, after July 24, 2012, with the System for Award Management (SAM), the Government's primary registrant database;

c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and

d. Maintain an active CCR or SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet. A DUNS number can be created within one business day.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow 2-5 weeks for your TIN to become active. If you need

a new TIN, please allow 2-5 weeks for your TIN to become active.

The CCR or SAM registration process may take five or more business days to complete. If you are currently registered with the CCR, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your registration annually. This may take three or more business days to complete. Information about SAM is available at SAM.gov.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page:
www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.

7. Other Submission Requirements:

Applications for grants under the i3 program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for Validation grants under the i3 program, CFDA number 84.411B, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant application for the i3 program at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.411, not 84.411B).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that

you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at www.G5.gov.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov,

please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Carol Lyons, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4W203, Washington, DC 20202-5930. FAX: (202) 205-5631.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.411B)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may

deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (84.411B)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the

U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at
(202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for the Validation competition are from the 2013 i3 NFP and are as follows:

The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in the parenthesis next to the criterion. An applicant may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the selection criteria for the application.

Note: In responding to the selection criteria, applicants should keep in mind that peer reviewers may consider only the information provided in the written application when scoring and commenting on the application. Therefore, applicants should structure their applications with the goal of helping peer reviewers understand:

- What the applicant is proposing to do, including the absolute priority (or, if the applicant has selected the absolute priority for Serving Rural Communities, the absolute priorities) under which the applicant intends the application to be reviewed;
- How the proposed project will reach a scale that the applicant was previously unable to reach, including further testing in order to overcome barriers to expansion;

- What the outcomes of the project will be if it is successful, including how those outcomes will be evaluated; and

- What procedures are in place for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Selection Criteria for the Validation Grant Application:

A. Significance (up to 20 points).

In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The likelihood that the project will have the estimated impact, including the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that unmet demand for the proposed project or the proposed services will enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale.

(2) The feasibility of national expansion if favorable outcomes are achieved.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the proposed project will address unmet demands and enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how the applicant will ensure future scaling given positive results.

B. Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 points).

In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the national need and priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit plan or actions to achieve the goals, including identification of any elements of the project logic model that require further testing or development.

(3) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the unmet needs within the context of the absolute priority. Additionally, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify barriers to scaling and how the proposed project will address and overcome these barriers.

C. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 20 points).

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional (as defined in this notice) during the project period.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project and use that feedback to make improvements to the project.

Applicants are also encouraged to explain how they will achieve expanding the project to the national or regional level by the end of the grant.

D. Personnel (up to 10 points).

In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including

the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

(2) The qualifications and experience of the project director and other key project personnel and the extent to which they have the expertise to accomplish the proposed tasks.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the staffing plan and key personnel positions for the project, especially for the first year. Applicants are also encouraged to address how the team's prior experiences have prepared them for implementing the proposed project successfully.

E. Quality of Project Evaluation (up to 30 points).

In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the

project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.¹²

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. These methods for evaluation should include whether the evaluation would meet What Works Clearinghouse

¹² See What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 2.1, September 2011), which is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

Evidence Standards. Further, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify how the project will be evaluated at the proposed scale, including a description of the proposed sample size and project impacts as well as the key components of the proposed project for implementation.

We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:

(1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook:

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and

(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

2. Review and Selection Process: As described earlier in this notice, before making awards, we will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in this notice to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements. This screening process may occur at various stages of the process; applicants that are determined ineligible will not receive a grant, regardless of peer reviewer scores or comments.

We will use independent peer reviewers with varied backgrounds and professions, including pre-kindergarten-12

teachers and principals, college and university educators, researchers and evaluators, social entrepreneurs, strategy consultants, grant makers and managers, and others with education expertise for the peer review process. All reviewers will be thoroughly screened for conflicts of interest to ensure a fair and competitive review process.

Peer reviewers will read, prepare a written evaluation, and score the assigned applications, using the selection criteria provided in this notice. For Validation grant applications, the Department intends to conduct a single tier review. If an eligible applicant has chosen to address either of the first two competitive preference priorities (Improving Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity or Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices) in order to earn competitive preference priority points, reviewers will review and score those competitive preference priorities. If competitive preference priority points are awarded, those points will be included in the eligible applicant's overall score. If an eligible applicant has chosen to address the last competitive preference priority (Supporting Novice i3 Applicants) to earn competitive preference priority points, the Department will review its list of previous i3 grantees in scoring this competitive preference priority.

We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

Finally, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary also requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Special Conditions: Under 34 CFR 74.14 and 80.12, the Secretary may impose special conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 34 CFR parts 74 or 80, as applicable; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

4. Performance Measures: The overall purpose of the i3 program is to expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative practices that are demonstrated to have an impact on improving student achievement or student growth for high-need students. We have established several performance measures for the i3 Validation grants.

Short-term performance measures: (1) the percentage of grantees that reach their annual target number of students as specified in the application; (2) the percentage of programs, practices, or strategies supported by a Validation grant with ongoing well-designed and independent evaluations that will provide evidence of their effectiveness at improving student outcomes; (3) the percentage of programs, practices, or strategies supported

by a Validation grant with ongoing evaluations that are providing high-quality implementation data and performance feedback that allow for periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes; and (4) the cost per student actually served by the grant.

Long-term performance measures: (1) the percentage of grantees that reach the targeted number of students specified in the application; (2) the percentage of programs, practices, or strategies supported by a Validation grant that implement a completed well-designed, well-implemented and independent evaluation that provides evidence of their effectiveness at improving student outcomes; (3) the percentage of programs, practices, or strategies supported by a Validation grant with a completed well-designed, well-implemented and independent evaluation that provides information about the key elements and the approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings; and (4) the cost per student for programs, practices, or strategies that were proven to be effective at improving educational outcomes for students.

5. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.253, the extent to which a grantee has made "substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application."

This consideration includes the review of a grantee's progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Carol Lyons, U.S.

Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4W203, Washington, DC 20202-5930. Telephone: (202) 453-7122. FAX: (202) 205-5631 or by e-mail: i3@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to the program

contact person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at:

www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated: April 30, 2013

James H. Shelton, III,
Assistant Deputy Secretary for
Innovation and Improvement.

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